

Application No. 10/677,565
 Reply to Office Action of November 8, 2005
 Amendment Dated: March 1, 2006

REMARKS

On pages 2 - 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected various claims due to various informalities. Applicants have amended the claims as shown and believe that they are now in good form.

On page 4, the Examiner rejected the claims as being anticipated by Hirayanagi et al. '367 and Payvar '953.

Hirayanagi discloses a friction plate is constituted by a core plate, and friction members fixed respectively to opposite surfaces of the core plate. The friction member has oil passages, extending therethrough from its inner peripheral surface to its outer peripheral surface, and oil grooves which are open to the inner peripheral surface, but do not extend through the friction member. The area ratio of the oil grooves to the oil passages is 25% to 100%; and the width of the oil groove is not larger than the width of the oil passage. The length of the oil groove is not less than 1/4 of the length of the oil passage. It is not necessary that all of the oil grooves have the same length. Preferably, the width of the oil passage, as well as the width of the oil groove, is not more than 3 mm. The oil passages and the oil grooves may be inclined relative to the radial direction.

Payvar discloses a groove pattern for the friction facings of a wet clutch to equalize the face temperature of the friction facings and thus increase the thermal capacity of the clutch where there is continuous slippage. The groove pattern includes one or more circumferential grooves dividing the friction area into two or more annular

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bands with radial grooves in each band which increase in number from the inner band to the outer band.

Applicants note that each of the cited references fail to teach of Applicants' independent claims as now presented, all of which require a plurality of first channels or areas, at least one of which has a second channel in fluid communication therewith for permitting fluid to flow from a first area to a second area. The first and second channels have depths that are different and the different depths are associated with different edges of the friction material.

By this and the prior amendment, note that some of the claims recite, for example, that the first channel has a depth that extends one hundred percent or substantially an entire thickness of the friction material, while the second channel extends less than one hundred percent. This facilitates defining a step or smaller area through which fluid may flow over a connector which connects two walls that cooperate with the connector to define the second channel. None of the references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach of these features. In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe that these claims are now in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicant is filing concurrently under separate cover a request for a one month extension of time.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required by this paper, or to credit any overpayment, to **Deposit Account No. 50-1287**. Applicants hereby provide a general

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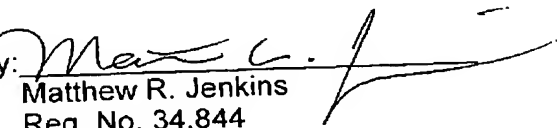
request for any extension of time which may be required at any time during the prosecution of the application. The Commissioner is also authorized to charge any fees which have not been previously paid for by check and which are required during the prosecution of this application to **Deposit Account No. 50-1287**. (Should Deposit Account No. 50-1287 be deficient, please charge any further deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 10-0220.)

Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned via telephone with any questions or comments regarding this case. **Applicants respectfully request an interview with the Examiner is this Amendment does not place this case in condition for allowance.**

Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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